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342  
HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

U. S. Department of Agriculture

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(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Soybeans and Banquets." Information from Bureau of Home Economics, USDA.

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One day last month I told you about a delicious soybean dinner served to an American traveling in China. He had stopped at a Buddhist temple. The dinner included what looked like a fish, done to a turn; the likeness of a whole chicken, swimming in a golden chicken soup, and many vegetables and spices. Every dish was different, and each dish was made entirely of soybeans!

After I had told that story, I made some comment about American housewives, clever as they are, not being able to prepare a dinner entirely of soybeans. Now it looks as if I might have to eat my words. For a friend who lives in Chicago describes a banquet of soybeans served at the fair.

"The meal proved to be a banquet of the most delectable of foods," he says, "all prepared from the popular soybean now grown on more than three million American farm acres. We started the meal with tomato juice seasoned with soybean sauce, salted soybeans, and celery stalks stuffed with delicious soybean cheese.

"Then came puree of soybean with tas', soybean-flour wafers. After that came soybean croquettes with tomato sauce, buttered green soybeans, pineapple ring with soybean cheese and dressing, and with it soybean bread buttered with soybean relish."

And that's not all. "To cap the climax," says my friend, "came fresh apple pie with soybean crust, assorted soybean cakes and cookies, soybean coffee and soybean milk. It was a novel, appetizing, and satisfying meal."

Well, after hearing about the banquet served recently in Chicago, I won't dwell any longer on the delicious soybean meals served in China. The Chinese ought to know how to prepare soybeans for the table. They've been using them for thousands of years.

The soybean wasn't introduced into the United States until 1804, and now it's considered one of our most important forage crops. This year, many more soybeans were planted in the United States than ever before. Soybeans are one of those crops which have many uses. The beans themselves, either green or dry, are good to cook and to eat. They're members of the popular bean and pea families, all rich in protein.

But soybeans are "different." Their protein is what the nutrition chemists call "efficient" protein -- like that in meat, milk, eggs, and fish. Soybeans are the only vegetable known that contains a protein enough like the animal protein to be called "efficient." And we need a regular supply of "efficient" protein -- to build and rebuild tissues, and to keep our bodies healthy and vigorous.



Soybeans are good sources of calcium, too, and phosphorus and iron. The green beans furnish vitamins, especially vitamins A, B, and G. Soybeans contain very little starch; they're often used in diets for diabetics.

But enough of food values. Let's talk about appetizing soybean dishes. While soybeans are green, they can take the place of other green vegetables. Even the field beans make a good green vegetable. Of course, if you're planting soybeans in your garden, for table use, you'd probably choose the "Hahto" or "Easy Cook" varieties, which are especially recommended as green vegetables and dry beans. Or you might want the seed of new varieties which the Department of Agriculture is developing on its experimental farms.

A bean with a name like "Easy Cook" appeals to me. And I wish the scientist would find a variety they could name "Easy Shell." I'll tell you one thing about shelling green soybeans -- they're what my Highland neighbor calls a "wee mite" hard to shell. She drops them, pods and all, into hot water, and boils them for about three minutes. Then the beans come out more easily. Soybeans also need longer cooking than our ordinary kinds of shell beans. Better allow thirty minutes at least for the green ones. If you're cooking the dry soybeans, soak them overnight and then cook them several hours, unless you can shorten the time with a pressure cooker.

If you want to serve green soybeans at their best, pick them at just the right stage of development -- that is, when they have reached full size, and are still green and succulent.

The Bureau of Home Economics, in Washington, has some mimeographed recipes for cooking soybeans and serving them in a variety of ways. The recipes include directions for preparing both green and dried soybeans, and for such dishes as scalloped green soybeans, casserole of soybeans, soybeans roasted, in croquettes, soup, souffle, and salad. There's a recipe for soybean muffins, too.

If you like soybean sprouts, so widely used in chop suey, you can sprout your own, in a big flower pot or a good-sized sink strainer. Be sure it is large enough, for the beans increase in bulk about six times, as they sprout. Soak the beans overnight. Next morning place them in the container, cover them, and leave them in a warm place. For the next four to six days, while they're sprouting, flood the beans with warm water four or five times a day. Keep the sprouts in a cool place, just as you would any fresh vegetable. They're very nice in chop suey, as I said before, and also, either raw or cooked, in salads, omelets, souffles, meat stews, and fricassées.

Write to the Bureau of Home Economics, if you want the soybean recipes, and directions for sprouting the beans at home.

